

ATHENS REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES Minutes of July 18, 2024 Meeting

**Athens-Clarke County
Library, Boardroom, 3:30 pm**

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chairman Campbell. Present were Ms. Terrell, Ms. Norris, Mr. Lutz, Mr. Campbell, Ms. Russell, Mr. Woods, Mr. Garner, Ms. Frey, Ms. Brickman, Ms. Quick, and Ms. Ross. Absent were Ms. Morris, Mr. Foster (sub). and Ms. Cox.

Staff present were Ms. Bell, Ms. Price, Ms. Shimobi-Obijuru, Ms. Green, Ms. Lavengood, Ms. Hood, Ms. Calia, Ms. Josey, Ms. Mayfield, and Ms. Plaksin.

Recognitions and Resolutions - None

The Draft Minutes of the April 18, 2024 meeting were unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Lutz, seconded by Ms. Russell)

The July 18, 2024 agenda was unanimously adopted. (motioned by Ms. Ross, seconded by Ms. Norris)

Public Comment - none

Financial Report:

Ms. Lavengood gave the report. Board members were presented with the FY25 Proposed Budget and the FY2024-Q4 Financial Report. Ms. Lavengood opened the floor for questions and comments. She reported that final numbers will be available at the January meeting. Financial Report FY2024-Q4 was unanimously accepted. (motioned by Mr. Woods, seconded by Ms. Quick)

Regional Reports

Athens-Clarke County:

Ms. Russell gave the report. She reported that Family Fun Day was a great success with over 2,000 people in attendance. Over 500 swag bags were given to attendees.

The ACCL Board approved the rental of the lot next door to the Pinewoods library for programming and other library services. Pinewoods Library has seen an increase in patronage and engagement and the Board wants to support the continuation of this.

Franklin County:

Ms. Quick gave the report. She reported that patronage is up, but computer use has decreased slightly.

Ms. Quick reported that the Board is electing new officers. Unfortunately, this will be her last meeting, as she is moving out of town. She extended her thanks to everyone for their hard work and being a pleasure to work with.

Madison County:

Ms. Ross gave the report. She reported that programming continues to go well.

Summer Reading is in full swing and is also going well. Some time ago, a large donation was gifted to the Madison County Library. Ms. Ross reported that the gift was invested into a Georgia Fund One account. Lastly, the Board is currently looking at applications for the vacant seat on the Board.

Oconee County:

Mr. Campbell gave the report. He was pleased to report that the patronage at the new library continues to grow. The community is very excited about the library. The Board is currently discussing the budget. He also reported that there are openings on the Board and they hope to fill vacant positions soon.

Oglethorpe:

Mr. Garner gave the report. He reported that the Board has had lots of budget discussions. The budget was submitted with an explanation of an increase in insurance.

He expressed gratitude for the Branch Manager and staff for their incredible work. Usage numbers are up and programming is going very well. He was very pleased to report that community partners are increasingly involved.

Director's Report:

Director Bell gave the report. She began by giving an IRS update. She reported that the IRS was paid the final amount of \$4,377.00 on 6/3/24.

She asked board members to save the date November 20, 2024, Staff Development Day. ARLS Board Chair, Mark Campbell, is extending an invitation to all Board members to join the staff for a day of fellowship and development. We hope to have a special board activity planned.

Ms. Bell announced that a new platform will soon be available to patrons. The Palace Project is an easy to use app that pulls content from other electronic reading resources so that everything is accessible in one place. GPLS is funding the project. Ms. Bell will let Board members know when Palace goes live.

ARLS will host the Fall Directors Meeting in September. This is a 3 day event when all Library Directors and GPLS come together for a meeting. Ms. Bell thanked Theresa Price for forming a committee to work with her in making all the arrangements.

Ms. Bell informed the Board that GPLS recommended that each Board's bylaws include how the Board will address public comment. Trustees were given a sample wording document. **(Action Item)**

Effective July 1, 2024, the ceiling for exempt status (FLSA overtime rule) will be raised from \$35,568 annually to \$55,068 annually. Salaried employees working 40 hours and earning \$55,068 annually will now fall into the non exempt category. These employees will earn 1.5 hours of compensatory time. According to our policy, all overtime (work over 40 hours in a week) requires supervisor approval.

Ms. Bell informed the board of four new Finance Policies in which she will be asking for their approval. Updated copies of the Capital Budgets Policy, Long-term Financial Planning Policy, Business Expenditure Policy, and a new Purchasing Policy were presented to Trustees.

(Action Item)

Next, Director Bell requested the Regional Board approve Kim Sites as the accountant to perform the 2024 AUP. The fee for her services is \$5,200.00. *(Action Item)*

A new Technology Plan is being developed and will be completed by September in time for submission with the Annual Report. The draft was sent to trustees by email. IT is working on including an AI component in the plan.

On June 24, we received the following news: “The employer contribution monthly amount of \$1093.00 for each library employee enrolled in SHBP will continue until December 2024. For premium deduction after January 1, 2025, the rate will increase to \$1580.00 and continue until changed by Board resolution.”

The news came as a surprise. We were expecting and budgeted for an increase of \$1093 to \$1343 per salaried employee starting in January 2025. The sudden acceleration and increase caused us to reevaluate all of our budgets to include this additional cost.

On March 28, 2024, we were alerted that someone filed a complaint against ARLS with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The complaint alleges discrimination based on disability. The complaint claims that the library is failing to afford persons with disabilities an opportunity to participate and benefit from the services, programs, and activities communicated through our websites and 3rd party websites.

Director Bell informed the Board that we are not the only library who received this complaint. GPLS and many other libraries across Georgia received the same complaint.

Ms. Bell commented that we want our services to be accessible to everyone and she will take this opportunity to make sure we do all we can to accommodate every person. After contacting State Librarian Julie Walker, she learned that GPLS is using the the

Georgia Tech Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation to conduct their accessibility audit. The cost is \$4,550.00. The Board will be updated as we move forward with the process.

Director Bell was pleased to report that ADP is now fully implemented and rolled out to staff. She shared a flowchart with trustees showing staff responsibilities and ADP responsibilities.

Finally, the new Welcome Brochure was presented to the Board by Darcy Calia, Public Information Officer.

Ms. Bell then took the opportunity to announce her retirement. She expressed her pleasure for working with a great staff and incredibly supportive Boards. She has informed Julie Walker. If needed, Julie is willing to assist the Board in finding a new Executive Director.

Committee Reports:

Finance - None.

Personnel - Mr. Campbell reported that the Personnel Committee met to discuss Director Bell's annual evaluation.

Policy - Chairman Campbell reported that the Policy Committee has not had time to meet. He made the recommendations to table approving the policies put before the Board until the October meeting. Unanimously approved. (motioned by Mr. Lutz, seconded by Ms. Terrell)

Nominating - Mr. Lutz reported that the Nominating Committee will meet before the October meeting to discuss filling vacant positions.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- a. Approval of policies put before the Board - Tabled until October.
 - Library Budget Policy
 - Long Term Financial Planning Policy
 - Business Expenditure Policy
 - Purchasing Policy
- b. Approval of FY25 Proposed Budget - Unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Brickman, seconded by Ms. Russell)

Announcements: Ms. Ritter asked Trustees to consider volunteering at the upcoming FOL book sale.

Adjourn: With no further business, Chairman Campbell called for adjournment at 4:32 p.m.

Unanimously accepted.(motioned by Ms. Norris, seconded by Ms. Russell)

Next Meeting October 17, 2024 at 3:30 pm.

Board Actions

- Approval of FY25 Proposed Budget - Unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Brickman, seconded by Ms. Russell)
- Approval of Kim Site as Accountant for annual AUP - Unanimously approved. (motioned by Ms. Quick, seconded by Ms. Russell)
- Approval to revise bylaws to include public comment wording as recommended by GPLS - Unanimously approved without opposition